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ABSTRACT

Word identification involves many possible strategies in order for the reader to familiarize himself with vocabulary to gain meaning. One strategy is the development of sight vocabulary; another is phonetic analysis, which includes sound-symbol correspondence, syllabication, and accent; and a final strategy is structural analysis, which includes roots, compound words, inflected endings, prefixes, suffixes, and contractions. The reader, however, should not become totally dependent on these strategies; such dependency could result in serious problems. Elementary level English as a Second Language (ESL) readers will have varying degrees of difficulty in identifying words, depending on the nature of their native script and the transfer to English print. Word identification may or may not be an important aspect to a reading program for the individual reader. It is important, however, that the ESL reader be familiar with the multitude of ways of identifying words in order to gain meaning. (Author)

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WORD IDENTIFICATION

FOR

ESL READERS

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WORD IDENTIFICATION

Before beginning a discussion of the various stages a reader uses to identify individual words, it should be stated that the skilled reader spends very little time focusing on single words. He extracts from the page the least amount of information to get the meaning. However, there are times when a word or words unfamiliar to him must be identified in order to grasp the message the author is conveying. In these instances the skilled reader is like the beginning reader who needs to "attack" each new word to get meaning.

Students learning to read and occasionally skilled readers require strategies for reading words unknown to them and making these words part of their reading vocabulary. One strategy is the continuous development of a sight vocabulary. Another focuses on the sound symbol correspondence (phonetic analysis), and a third on the morphological units (structural analysis), which allow him to "break down" a word in order to identify it. Once the word is identified, the context provides the basis for checking the correctness. Figure 1 illustrates the strategies the reader may use to identify an unfamiliar word.

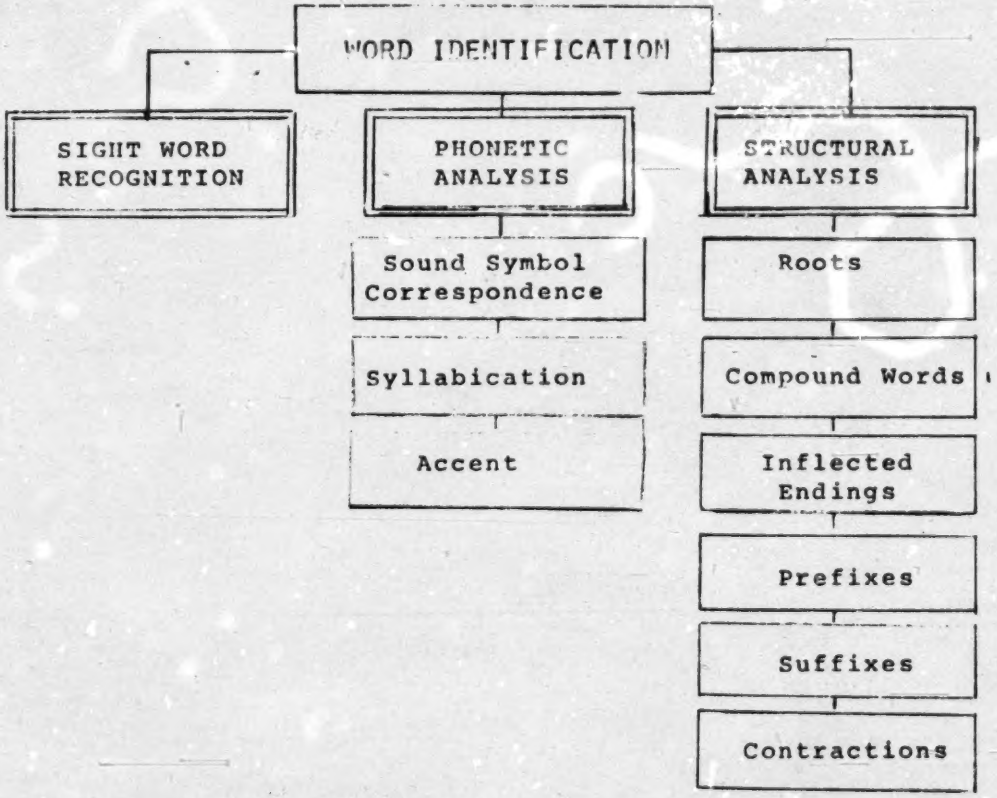

FIGURE V

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SIGHT WORD RECOGNITION

Sight word recognition refers to the immediate identification of a whole word by the reader. He uses the configuration of the word rather than applying generalizations about the sounds which are represented by the letters. Sight words fall into two categories: those which are used so frequently that their recognition comes from habit and those words which do not adhere to any phonic generalizations and are therefore identified as wholes. Development of a sight vocabulary is an ongoing process which continues as long as the person reads. The skilled reader has acquired a sight vocabulary of thousands of words, and it increases as he reads. This vocabulary is the starting point for learning to read; instruction in other skills should be based on sight words already known.

The ESL student, especially, needs a large sight vocabulary, as his limited language knowledge may hinder efficient application of phonetic and structural analysis. Words selected from instruction should be from the student's oral vocabulary.

PHONETIC ANALYSIS

Phonetic analysis refers to the ability to recognize sound/symbol relationships in order to identify a word. This involves a knowledge of the phonological patterns of the language, knowledge of the letters and their corresponding sounds in the particular word environment, the ability to identify such sound-symbol relationships while doing"real" reading and the application of generalizations in situations calling for them.

With the use of phonetic analysis, the reader is able to blend the individual sounds in the given order to identify a word not recognized instantly as a sight word. Along with the other identification strategies, it is a necessary means to the end of identifying unknown words. Because of the nature of the English language and its orthography, the reader should not become dependent on phonetic analysis as the sole means to this end; such dependency can produce serious problems.

As a necessary skill, phonetic analysis should be taught systematically, emphasizing only those phoneme/grapheme correspondences not identified by the students on their own. ESL adult students should be made aware of these correspondences through a contrastive analysis of problem sounds from the native language to English. In order to plan instruction,the teacher should have knowledge of the content of phonics.

The English language contains 44 sounds (phonemes) spelled in 2501 ways employing 26 letters. These twenty six letters are used

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to represent more than one phoneme, in combination to represent sounds not represented by letters in the alphabet, and, in the case of silent letters, to represent no phoneme at all. Very often there are clues to identify the particular phoneme represented; a discussion of these clues is the purpose of this chapter.

The alphabet may be divided into two categories: consonants and vowels.

CONSONANTS

The letters *w* and *y* sometimes act as consonants and sometimes as vowels. However, for the purpose of this chapter they will be considered as consonants. The consonant letters are: *b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y,* and *z*. The chart below illustrates the sounds these letters represent.

LETTER	SOUNDS	EXAMPLES
b	/b/	*bad*
	silent	*lamb*
c	/s/	*cent*
	/k/	*cake*
d	/d/	*door*
f	/f/	*far*
g	/g/	*girl*
	/j/	*generous*
	silent	*gnat*
h	/h/	*hin*
	silent	*hour*
j	/j/	*jins*
k	/k/	*keep*
	silent	*knight*
l	/l/	*light*
	silent	*folk*
n	/n/	*now*
	silent	*column*
p	/p/	*people*
	silent	*psalm*
q	/kw/	*queen*
r	/r/	*ring*
s	/s/	*sing*
	/z/	*sudz*
t	/t/	*time*
	silent	*glisten*
v	/v/	*veil*
w	/w/	*wing*
	silent	*mow*
x	/z/	*xylophene*
	/gz/	*extra*
	/ks/	*extreme*
y	/y/	*yes*
	/z/	*zebra*

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As single consonants these letters represent no sound of their own, but represent sounds already represented by other letters.

Before proceeding to discuss generalizations about the single consonant letters, it is necessary to distinguish voiced and voiceless consonants. Voiced consonants are made with the vocal chords closed and vibrating and are the /d/, /z/, /g/, /v/, /b/. When a consonant sound originates in the mouth (there is no vibration of the vocal chords) it is considered voiceless. The /t/, /s/, /k/, /f/, and /p/ are the voiceless counterparts of the above voiced consonants. The determination of the particular sound represented by a consonant may be based on whether or not the preceding consonant is voiced. Generalizations about the consonant letters and the represented sounds can be stated as follows:

b

The letter *b* usually represents the initial sound heard in the word *bad*; however, when preceded by the letter in the same syllable, it is usually silent.

c

The letter *c* represents two sounds; the soft sound associated with the letter *s* when it is followed by *i*, *e* and *y* and the hard sound associated with the letter *k* when followed by *a*, *o* and *u*.

d

The letter *d* represents the initial sound heard in the word *door* except when the consonant preceding in a syllable is voiceless. In this case the letter *d* represents the sound associated with the letter *t*.

f

The letter *f* always represents the initial sound heard in the word *fear*.

g

The letter *g* represents the soft sound associated with the letter *j* when followed by *i*, *e* or *y* and the hard sound when followed by any other letter or is the final letter in the syllable. The letter can also be silent when followed by the letter *a* in a syllable.

h

The letter *h* usually represents the initial sound heard in the word *he*. It may, however, be silent in the initial portion if the word is of French origin. It may also be silent when it follows *g*, *k* or *r* at beginning of a word.

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j

The letter *j* represents the initial sound heard in the word *joke*.

k

The letter *k* usually represents the initial sound heard in the word *kitchen*. However, when it is the initial sound in a word followed by the letter *r*, it is silent.

l

The letter *l* usually represents the initial sound heard in the word *like*. It is sometimes silent when it is followed by a consonant in the same syllable.

m

The letter *m* represents the initial sound heard in the word *me*.

n

The letter *n* represents the initial sound heard in the word *near* unless it follows *m* in a syllable. Then it is silent.

p

The letter *p* usually represents the initial sound heard in the word *poor*. It is silent as the initial letter followed by *s*.

r

The letter *r* represents the initial sound heard in the word *red*.

s

The letter *s* often represents the initial sound heard in the word *seem*. When the letter *s* is preceded by a consonant sound which is not voiceless in the same syllable, it represents the sound associated with the letter z.

t

The letter *t* usually represents the sound associated with the initial sound in the word *term*. It is silent when it precedes *ch* in a syllable or follows *s* (sometimes).

v

The letter *v* represents the sound associated with the initial sound in the word *veil*.

w

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The letter *w* usually represents the initial sound in the word *walk*. However, it is sometimes silent if preceded by *o* in a syllable.

x

The letter *x* may represent three sounds. If it is the initial letter in a word, it represents the sound associated with the letter If followed by a vowel or the letter *h*, it usually records a sound recorded by the letter *gz*. It also represents the sound recorded by *ks*.

y

The letter *y* represents the initial sound in the word *year*.

z

The letter z represents the initial sound in the word *zebra*.

In addition to single consonant letters, there are certain combinations of consonants. They fall into two categories: diagraphs and blends. A diagraph represents a sound different from either of the two letters. They are: *ch, ph, th, sh, gh, hg.*
A blend is a combination in which the sounds of each of the letters is maintained, but they are said blended together. They are: *bl, br, cl, cr, dr, dw, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, tw, scr.*

VOWELS

The vowels are *a, e, i, o,* and *u,* with each of them representing two major sounds called long and short:

$\bar{a}$	*a*te
a	*a*t
$\bar{e}$	*e*ven
e	l*e*t
$\bar{i}$	m*i*ne
i	r*i*p
$\bar{o}$	*o*nly
o	l*o*t
$\bar{u}$	*u*se
u	c*u*p

The letter *e* very often is silent when in final position. The reader can identify a long or short vowel by examining the position of the vowel in relationship to consonants and other vowels in the same syllable.

Long Vowels. The conditions which usually mean the vowel sound is long are as follows: When one vowel comes at the end of a syllable, it is usually long.

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Examples: *famous* *me* *go*

When there are two vowels in a syllable, one of which is a final *e*, the first vowel is long.

Examples: *ate* *eve* *ice* *ode* *use*
mate *line* *node* *fuse*

When *i* is the only vowel and followed by *ld*, *nd*, or *gh* in syllable, it is usually long.
(This is an exception to a condition usually indicating a short vowel sound)

Examples: *mild* *grind* *light*

When *o* is the only vowel and followed by *ld* in a syllable, it is usually long.

Examples: *cold*

(This is an exception to a condition usually indicating a short vowel sound)

Examples: *lance* *ledge* *wince* *judge*

(This is an exception to the silent *e* condition which usually indicates the presence of a long vowel)

Y as a Vowel. Sometimes the letter *y* acts as a vowel under the following conditions:
-When the *y* is final sound in a one syllable word it usually has the soundof the long *i*.

Examples: *my* *cry*

-When *y* is the final sound in a word of more than one syllable, it usually has a sound close to a long *e*.

Examples: *friendly* *jittery*

-Why *y* is in the medial position of a syllable, with no other vowel, it usually has the short *i* sound.
Examples: *myth*

VOWEL-CONSONANT COMBINATIONS

The consonants *r*, *w*, and *e* affect the sounds of the vowels when they follow the vowel in a syllable, in the following way:
-When a vowel is followed by the letter *r*, a blended sound (neither) long or short) results.

Examples: *car* *inert* *her* *storm* *fur*

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-When a vowel is followed by the letter *r* plus an *e* the blended sound differs from the above.

Examples: *care here fire more lure*

-When an *a* is followed by the consonant *l*, it represents a broad sound.

Examples: *mall tall hall*

-When the vowels *a, e, o* are followed by the letter *w* the sound is neither long or short.

Examples: *paw new cow*

The consonants *d, t, c,* and *q* affect the sounds of certain vowels if they precede them in the following way:
-When *d* or *t* precedes the letter *u* or a syllable, there is a slurring sound.

Examples: *education future*

-When *c, s* or *t* precedes the letter *i* in a syllable the resulting sound is the one usually associated with the digraph *sh*.

Examples: *glacial fusion faction*

The *q* is always followed by the letter *u*, and they represent *th* sound usually associated with the letters *kw* or *k*.

Examples: *queer racquet*

VOWEL COMBINATIONS

Vowels often appear together, and the sounds they represent are more variable than single vowels. There are eighteen such combinations used in English:

ai	*ea*	*ie*	*oa*	*ue*
au	*ei*		*oe**	*ui*
ay	*ei*		*oi**	*uy*
	eu		*oo**	
	ey		*ou*	
			*oy**	

The starred combinations are dipthongs; they will be discussed later. Although there are exceptions, the sounds of the other combinations can usually be identified by the following conditions: When two vowels come together in a syllable, the first is usually long and the second one silent.

Examples: *mail feat lied goat cue*

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When the vowel pair *ei* comes together in the same syllable and does not follow *c*, it usually has the sound of the long *a*.

Example: *feign*

When a syllable ends in *ous*, the *ou* represents a short *u* sound.

Example: *frivolous*

Dipthongs. A dipthong is a single sound different from either of the sounds usually associated with the letters. In the process of being sounded, a dipthong requires a change in the mouth position.

oi	*boil*	
oy	*boy*	
ou	*mouse*	
ou	*cow*	(The *w* acts as a vowel)

SYLLABICATION

The basic unit of phonetic analysis is the syllable. The generalizations stated above refer to conditions within a syllable. In order for a reader to apply these generalizations he must be able to identify syllabic units within words. Syllabication enables the reader to cope with a very long word by providing him with manageable units.

Syllables can be identified by the use of visual cues. In this case the letter arrangements - vowel and consonant placement determine syllabic units.

Generalizations about the patterns of these arrangements and syllabic division follow:

The pattern of vowel-consonant-consonant-vowel usually indicates division between the two consonants. (This does not hold when the two consonants form a digraph or blend: they are viewed as a single consonant)

Examples: *hap py*

The pattern of vowel-consonant-vowel usually indicates division between the first vowel and the consonant.

Examples: *e ven li vid*

Exception: If the consonant between the two vowels is an *x* the division occurs following the *x*.

Examples: *mix es ex ist*

The pattern consonant-final *le* usually indicates that the

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final syllable consists of that consonant and the *le*.

Examples: *ta ble lit tle*

Prefixes and suffixes in words are separate syllables.

Examples: *re make doubt less*

Words with the inflectional ending - *ed* fall into two categories: If the *ed* is preceded by the consonants *d* or *t* the *ed* forms a separate syllable.

Examples: *divid ed ticket ed*

If the *ed* is preceded by any other consonants, it does not form a separate syllable.

Examples: *reliev ed mark ed*

ACCENT

Knowledge of accent or stress patterns enables a reader to pronounce a word correctly. However, there are many variations of stress resulting from the origin of the root of the word, the grammatical function of the word and, in some cases, regional differences. There are some generalizations, knowledge of which can aid the reader. They are:

The accent usually falls on the first syllable in most two syllable words.

Examples: *bro̍ ken do̍ ing*

The accent usually falls on the root (or within it) in derived or inflected forms of words.

Examples: *re̍turn si̍nging*

The accent usually falls on the first syllable if the first vowel is followed by two consonants.

Examples: *ma̍y be a̍f ter*

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Structural analysis includes the study of root words, inflectional endings, prefixes, suffixes, compound words and contractions. Recognition of meaningful parts of words enables the reader to get to the unknown parts, apply phonetic analysis to it and identify

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the whole word.

A knowledge of structural analysis enables the student to understand the meaning of a word and to determine the grammatical function of that word, thereby aiding meaning of the entire sentence.

ROOT WORDS

A root word is the center or base to which prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings may be added. Some common roots are:

tele--far	*aud--hear*	*aqua--water*
tort--twist	*man(u) --hand*	*scope--watch*
scribe--write	*pel--drive*	*electro--by friction*
dent--tooth	*sect--cut*	*micro--small*
ject--throw	*meter--measure*	*serv--keep,save*
ped--foot	*vis--see*	*mit(t)--send*

INFLECTIONAL ENDINGS

Inflectional endings are meaningful elements (*s, es, s', ed, ing, en, er, est*) that are affixed to the ends of words to form plural and the possessive case of nouns (*boys, churches, boy's)*; the past tense, the third person singular, present indicative, and the present and past participles of verbs *(walked, walks, walking)* and the comparison of adjectives or adverbs *(bigger, biggest)*.

PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

A prefix is a meaningful element that is affixed to the beginning of a root word; a suffix is a meaningful element that is affixed to the end of a word. List of prefixes and suffixes follow:

Prefix	Meaning
a (ab)	*from, away*
a (an)	*without, not*
ad	*to, toward*
ambi (amphi)	*around, both*
ante	*before*
anti	*against, opposite*
bi	*two, twice*
circum	*around*
con (co, col, com)	*together, with*
contra (counter)	*against*
de	*from, down from*

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dis (di)	*apart, not*
dia	*through, around*
epi	*upon*
eu	*well*
ex	*out of, from*
hetero	*different*
hypo, hyph	*under, below*
in (il, un, ir)	*into, not*
in, en	*in, into, among*
inter	*between*
intro	*within, against*
mono	*single, one*
non	*not*
ob	*against*
pan	*whole, all*
per	*fully, through*
peri	*around, about*
post	*after, behind*
pre	*before*
pro	*for, forward, in front of*
re	*back, again*
retro	*backward*
se	*aside*
semi	*half, partly*
sub	*under*
super	*over, above*
syn (sym)	*together with*
trans	*beyond, across*
tri	*three, thrice*
ultra	*beyond*
un	*not*

Suffix	Meaning
-able, -ible	*capable of being*
-ace, -acy	*state of being*
-ance, -ancy	
-age	*act or condition*
-al, eal, -ial	*relation to, that which, on account of*
-an, -ean, ian	*one who, relating to*
	adj.: being
-ant	*noun: one who*
-ar, -er	*relating to, like*
	adj.: relating to
-ary	*noun: one who*
	place where
	adj.: having quality
-ate	*noun: one who*
	verb: to make

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-cle, -acle -icle, -cule	little
-ee	one who is (object of action)
-eer	one who does (1) little
-en	(2) made of
-ence -ency	state or quality
-ent	adj.: being noun: one who
-et, -let	little
-fic	causing, producing
-fy, -ify	to make
-hood	state, condition
-ice	like, made of that which, quality or state of being
-id	pertaining to, being in a condition of
-ile	relating to
-ion	act, or state of being
-ise, -ize	to make
-ist, -ite	one who
-ity, -ty	state
-ive	relating to
-kin	little
-less	without
-ment	state of being, act
-or, -ar, -e	one who, that which
-ory	relating to that which pertains to place or serving for
-ose, -ous	abounding in
-some	full of
-tude, -itude	condition
-ule	little
-ward	turning to, in direction of
-wright	doer, worker

COMPOUND WORDS

Compound words are composed of two smaller words joined together. They originated to define a new or different concept. The

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following are some common examples of compounds words:

toothache	*firearms*	*landlord*
sawmill	*airplane*	*hitchhike*
blackbird	*lifeboat*	*hardship*
underground	*seashore*	*schoolwork*
housework	*nightmare*	*armchair*

CONTRACTIONS

Contractions are abbreviated forms used in informal speech. There are two kinds:

Pronoun-verb combinations

I'm	*we're*	*I'd*	*they'd*
you're	*they're*	*you'd*	
he's			
she's			

Verb-negator combinations

aren't	*shouldn't*	*hasn't*	*doesn't*
isn't	*couldn't*	*haven't*	*weren't*
wouldn't	*can't*	*won't*	*wasn't*

The ESL student may not be familiar with the concept of contracted forms. If his native language does not include a comparable form nor the use of an apostrophe, it will be necessary to introduce the concept orally, prior to showing it in print.

SUMMARY

Word identification involves many possible strategies in order for the reader to familiarize himself with vocabulary to gain meaning. One strategy is development of sight vocabulary; another is phonetic analysis, which includes sound symbol correspondence, syllabication, and accent; and a final strategy is structural analysis, which includes roots, compound words, inflected endings, prefixes, suffixes, and contractions. The reader, however, should not become totally dependent upon these strategies; such dependency could result in serious problems.

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